

Find Fatal Arsenal Blast Was Accident

The death of Everett Dudley Lee, a U. S. Rubber Co. worker, at the Kankakee unit of Joliet Arsenal, on March 23, was termed accidental, by a coroner's jury yesterday.

The inquest, conducted by Coroner Willard A. Blood, was one of two held at the Reeves funeral home this morning. The other inquest was into the fatality death of Buel Hurley, of Wilmington, who died in an auto accident on March 20.

In the Arsenal case, the jurors reported:

"LEE CAME to his death from complete incineration accidentally received while in the performance of his duties as an employe of the U. S. Rubber Co. He was on the second floor of a tetryl packing and weighing building, at 1:30 p.m., on March 23, when fire of unknown origin broke out in the building."

Testifying for U. S. Rubber Co., was Edward Nemanich, safety engineer, who made the initial investigation and inspection. Others testifying were Romeo S. Greene, 333½ S. Dearborn Ave., Kankakee, foreman in charge of the building when the fire broke out; Foy W. Nichols, 335 N. Wabash St., Bradley, an operator; and Lee's son, Roy.

During the inquest, it was testified that Lee was on the second floor, sweeping up excess tetryl which fell thru a screen and hopper while being packed in 50-pound boxes. The debris is re-refined after cleaning.

IT WAS LEE'S turn to do the cleaning, and Greene and Nichols who swept up at other times went to pack cases of tetryl on a "dingy" type of box-car.

Greene and Nichols were outside when they first noticed the flash of fire.

Seven other persons besides Lee were in the building and dashed to safety. They were identified as Harry G. Clark, 347 S. Wabash St., Kankakee; Carl E. Silkwood and Edward Baker, Jr., both of 21 E. Cass St., Joliet; Oliver B. Carpenter, 415 Gardner St., Joliet; Ruth M. Knowlson, 317½ Liberty St., Morris; Evangelyn Kadow, 481 N. Cottage Ave., Kankakee; and LaVonne D. Stowell, 211 Lafayette St., Wilmington.

In the Hurley inquest, the jurors reported that he came to his death from a skull fracture, accidentally received when the car he was driving overturned on Strip Mine road, about a half mile west of Wilmington. The accident occurred at 9:30 p. m. on March 20. The jurors said they are of the opinion that Hurley's car skidded on the loose gravel and lost control of the vehicle.